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EXTENSION SERVICE

REVIEW

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE * MAY 1969

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soil stewardship week may 11-18, 1969

The Extension Service Review is for Extension educators—in County, State, and Federal Extension agencies—who work directly or indirectly to help people learn how to use the newest findings in agriculture and home economics research to bring about a more abundant life for themselves and their communities.

The Review offers the Extension worker, in his role of educational leader, professional guideposts, new routes and tools for speedier, more successful endeavor. Through this exchange of methods, tried and found successful by Extension agents, the Review serves as a source of ideas and useful information on how to reach people and thus help them utilize more fully their own resources, to farm more efficiently, and to make the home and community a better place to live.

CLIFFORD M. HARDIN
Secretary of Agriculture

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Federal Extension Service

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EXTENSION SERVICE

REVIEW

Official monthly publication of Cooperative Extension Service; U. S. Department of Agriculture and State Land-Grant Colleges and Universities cooperating.

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Disappearing frontiers

The frontiers that beckoned to the first settlers in the new world seemed to offer an inexhaustible resource for producing the food and fiber to feed and clothe a growing Nation. It took almost 200 years from the time the first families settled in America for the population to reach the 3 million reported in the 1790 census. By 1968, only 178 years, the population had reached 201 million. And the present net population growth per year is more than two-thirds of the total U.S. population at the first census in 1790.

The growing population presented no problem as long as there was unclaimed land to be settled. But we have long since passed that point. Our per capita land area for producing food, fiber, housing, and recreation is decreasing steadily. We're demanding more and more from each square foot of land. In addition to our own needs, we must be concerned about the needs of future generations.

Looking out for these needs demands that we preserve and protect the productive capacity of our limited land resources. That is what Soil Stewardship Week is all about.—WJW



Credit school instructor H. B. Howell, left, presents a special certificate to the 500th graduate.

Banking and agriculture

by

Robert E. Kowalski
Assistant Extension Editor
Iowa State University

Today's complicated world often calls for knowledge in more than just one area—not just passing acquaintance, but deep understanding of methods and problems, techniques and rewards. Take for example the case of the banker who deals with farmers.

A farmer walks into the office of a lending institution and wants to borrow enough money to buy 200 feeder cattle. What does the representative of that agency have to know to decide whether the loan would be

a good risk—both for the institution and for the farmer?

If he has an understanding of the problem, he'll ask, "How many bushels of corn will you have available for feeding the cattle you'll buy?"

It takes 10,000 bushels of corn to feed the animals out for market. If that amount of corn isn't available, the farmer might be in trouble. He may have to borrow more money to buy additional feed, or sell the cattle before they are at optimum market weight and condition and thus pass up a profit opportunity.

If the farmer says he has 5,000 bushels of corn, the banker should be able to say that this amount can support 100 cattle, and whether the bank would be willing to loan additional funds for feed if 200 head were financed. But what if he doesn't have enough knowledge to ask questions? It can mean trouble for both the lending institution and the farmer.

For the past 23 years, Iowa State University and the Iowa Bankers Association have been giving a group of bankers background information on farming to solve these problems.

Every year in June, the two groups sponsor an Agricultural Credit School to give representatives from lending institutions knowledge in six areas related to agricultural credit. These include farm management, agricultural finance, agricultural production, agricultural economic policy, appraisal, and marketing.

The school is set up for 2 weeks, and the complete program is presented in 2 years. Those who attend the two 2-week programs are awarded a certificate. So far, 515 men have completed the 2-year school, and a total of 685 have attended at least 1 year.

To celebrate the graduation of the 500th student in 1968, a special certificate was awarded to Winfield G. Mayne, cashier at the Montgomery County National Bank in Red Oak, Iowa, whose name came up alphabetically as the 500th graduate.

Of the 86 students who attended the school in 1968, 46 were there for the first time and 40 graduated with their certificates. Twenty men were from out of State, representing lending institutions from Nebraska, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota; 66 were Iowans.

The director of the credit school, H. B. Howell, Extension economist at ISU, said he feels the school also gives its students a better acquaintance with the university. Oliver A. Hansen, president of the Iowa Bankers Association, said at the graduation luncheon that the students comprise a core of public relations minded men who will now be better qualified for their contacts with agricultural customers.

With a better knowledge of agriculture, they will be an asset to the agricultural community and to the lending institutions they represent. □

Irrigation demonstrations get results

by

Russell L. Herpich
Extension Irrigation Engineer
Kansas State University

Corn yield statistics in Kansas raise two interesting questions. Why is one-half the total crop produced on one-fourth of the total acreage? Why do some farmers get yields three times as high as their neighbors?

The answer is irrigation. The idea is catching on and spreading rapidly. Irrigated acreage has increased more than 10-fold in the last 20 years—from 138,686 acres in 1949 to more than 1.5 million in 1968.

Coincident with this expansion of irrigated land has been the Irrigation Demonstration Farm—the Extension media for educational work in irrigation.

The objectives of the Irrigation Demonstration Farm are to apply all the best knowledge available on irrigation farming to a single farm in order to capture the total impact of this knowledge. The major disciplines involved are development of the farm for irrigation; irrigation water management; selection of crop varieties and cropping programs; cultural practices; and farm management. The Extension irrigation engineer coordinates the efforts of workers representing the other disciplines.

The program is set up with selected irrigation farmers in geographic areas where irrigation has a good potential and likelihood of expansion. The farmer manages his farm in consultation with the irrigation engineer. Complete cost and return records are kept for each farm and for each crop on the farm. The farmer bears the total costs of the venture and receives all the profits.

In each area, efforts are concentrated on those crops best adapted to that area. In some cases the crop is corn. In others it is milo. Results are measured in terms of the total farm production, even though the overall objective is to increase the income of the individual farm and of the community.

The cooperating farms are used throughout the year by county agents for educational purposes. Co-operating farmers make the cost and return records available to Extension to show the absolute and the relative values of the various practices used on the farm.

The practices demonstrated on the farms include land development; selection of irrigation equipment; water management practices; crop variety and selection; fertilizer; soil quality and its relation to irrigation water management; planting patterns and row width; insect control; herbicide uses; and successful harvesting, storage, and crop utilization programs.

The results the agents are able to show include consistent corn yields exceeding 100 bushels per acre. Comparable increases are noted for milo.

The total impact of the program is difficult to evaluate. But we know it hasn't stopped with farm production. It shows a marked effect upon the development of agriculturally associated industries in each of the areas.

Related developments include expansion of hog production; the establishment of large commercial cattle

feedlots; and the installation of feed processing and distributing facilities.

During the past 20 years the program has been carried out cooperatively with 12 farmers. The tenure of farmers in the arrangement has extended from 3 to 7 years, depending upon the particular need of the community where the farm was located.

Total impact of the Irrigation Demonstration Farm is yet to be felt. Irrigated farming is expanding at the rate of 60,000 to 80,000 acres a year. It is expected to continue for at least



Irrigation farmers observe a soil profile demonstration designed to help them understand the relation of soil quality to irrigation water management.

10 to 12 years, bringing the total irrigated acreage in Kansas to 2.5 million acres, or 10 percent of the total cropland. Production from this land could bring up to \$100 million a year at that time.

This continued expansion, the increased yields, and the effects on associated industries in the communities where irrigated farming is practiced demonstrate conclusively that educational programs focused upon a specific objective can produce quick and effective results. □



One objective of the Demonstration Farms is to help water users better understand water management practices.

The interdisciplinary educational effort has one major goal—higher corn yields.



The needs of older people in three Minnesota counties are getting special attention through a Minnesota Extension Service pilot project which is part of the statewide Extension family living program.

Directing the project is Mrs. Irene Peterson, Extension agent in Todd, Wadena, and Otter Tail Counties. Arleen Barkeim, home economics Extension supervisor, has helped develop, direct, and coordinate the project.

Financed under Title III of the Older Americans Act, the project is designed to:

—Coordinate with the services of Senior Citizens Centers in the area.

—Provide services to senior citizens not being reached.

—Develop methods of working with senior citizens that can be applied to other rural counties.

The project began in Todd County, which has slightly under 3,000 men and women 65 or over, and has been expanded to three counties with a combined population of 11,317 persons 65 or older.

Since the project was initiated in July 1967, the project director has worked with the Governor's Council on Aging and with local agencies in the communities, including the eight Senior Citizens' Centers. Her significant contribution has been to coordinate programs for senior citizens among the various agencies. She serves as a go-between for the communities and the agencies with existing programs, but also develops additional activities needed in specific areas.

Work with community leaders and various agencies has been of paramount importance from the beginning. Such contacts have given Mrs. Peterson a better understanding of the needs of senior citizens and a knowledge of the available resources in the three counties.

This work has had a number of tangible results: organization of a Wadena County Committee for the Aging; a workshop on aging attended by 90 persons from various agencies

A series of food and nutrition programs on television in 1969—initiated by Mrs. Peterson—will give old and young alike valuable and much needed information on food buymanship, menu planning for one or two, food fads, and use of the basic four in planning meals for health and vitality. Radio and television programs on senior citizens' taxes also have been broadcast.

Of inestimable help to older people moving into the public housing project in Wadena was a class on planning their move wisely. Suggestions were given on what furniture to discard, what to keep, room arrangements, and the kinds of furnishings to consider if they were planning to buy. Mrs. Peterson sent letters to all housing applicants and invited furniture dealers to the meeting. She plans to offer similar classes when housing projects open in other towns.

But ways of getting senior citizens to attend educational meetings as enthusiastically as they go to bingo parties need to be discovered before it is possible to develop really meaningful activities, Mrs. Peterson says.

Visits and interviews with elderly people have revealed to Mrs. Peterson that they have many needs, not the least of which is companionship. With the help of two aides, she is setting up a volunteer program for public spirited citizens who will work with older people in nursing homes, at senior citizens' centers, and in individual homes.

The volunteers will visit shut-ins; provide transportation for shopping, church, or to the doctor; write letters or shop for them; and encourage development of hobbies.

Since one of the repeated requests from older people is for some part-time work to augment their income, Mrs. Peterson is cooperating in the Golden Age Employment Service being set up in the Long Prairie Day Center. Skills of the senior citizens who want employment are being surveyed, and this information will be

Serving senior citizens

by

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Assistant Extension Editor
University of Minnesota

as well as volunteers; educational meetings on health care attended by representatives of seven agencies; and a survey of employment interest and skills of senior citizens at the Senior Citizens Center in Long Prairie.

Initiating training for food service personnel in nursing homes and hospitals in the three counties has been one of Mrs. Peterson's projects. Cooperating in planning the sessions have been the Staples Vocational School, the State Board of Health, and the Minnesota Department of Education, along with home economics instructors and dietitians in the area.

Tips on meat and vegetable cookery, menu planning, special diets, calorie control, buying and storing quantity foods, quantity cookery, safe food handling, and food preparation tips were all included in the seven food service training sessions given at four different locations. Despite the severe Minnesota winter, more than 100 staff people in food services registered for the sessions.

given to the employers in the community. The Center will serve as a clearinghouse.

A "Foster Grandparents" program for non-institutionalized mentally retarded and disturbed children is being explored. Such a program would be a source of income as well as a service project for some older people.

Because many older people have impaired eyesight, one of the necessities Mrs. Peterson sees is to reach the blind and near-blind with education and recreation programs. An urgent need is to help them learn to care for themselves and their homes and to adjust to their handicap.

Much needed, Mrs. Peterson believes, is a counseling service in the centers to help senior citizens with decisionmaking. She plans to begin offering half a day a month at each center. Her role will be to do a minimum of counseling and a maximum of referring people to other community agencies and services. With that in mind, she is considering the preparation of a directory of services for senior citizens, in cooperation with the Concerted Services Project Director.

Success of any program with senior citizens depends to a great extent on the kind of person selected for leadership. As project director of the Extension pilot program, Mrs. Peterson is becoming known as a woman who cares, who listens, and who has valuable ideas and services to offer.

She tailors her activities and the subject matter of her classes to meet expressed needs. Her good human relations, her persistence, wise planning, and attention to detail were, in large part, responsible for the success of the workshop on aging, the health care meetings, and the community contacts she has made. She has acted as a catalyst to bring together people who had common concerns and problems but had not yet shared them.

As county Extension agents are drawn more and more into the Ex-



Elderly people appreciate visitors, and they often need help in finding ways to use their time. Above, an Extension volunteer admires the craft work of a senior citizen during a visit to a nursing home.

tension project for the elderly, activities can be expanded, Mrs. Peterson says. Objectives for the future of the program include development of leadership among senior citizens themselves, setting up counseling programs, exploring employment opportunities to a greater extent, reaching senior citizens, who are not in organized groups, and finding ways to help older people who remain in their homes.

One of the concerns of the Minnesota Extension family living staff in participating in this pilot project has

been to explore the possibility for developing programs and services for senior citizens that would be applicable throughout Minnesota's 87 counties.

At the conclusion of the second year of operation of this program—it is funded through August 1969—Mrs. Peterson plans to publish a manual, "How To Work With Senior Citizens in Your County." It will be for use by home agents as well as by individuals in other organizations concerned with educational programs and services for this clientele. □

Recreation for Mt. Meigs families

by
Kenneth Copeland
Extension Magazine Editor
Auburn University

Raising family income and providing recreation have received major emphasis in Alabama's Mt. Meigs community during recent years.

"Naturally, family income came first," said Addre Bryant, Montgomery County Extension farm agent. "One of our Extension projects in the county has been to grow more vegetable crops. People in the Mt. Meigs community have responded with great enthusiasm. In fact, some of the producers have made okra and cucumber yields as high as anywhere in Alabama."



Last year some 75 growers in the Mt. Meigs community produced and sold almost \$25,000 worth of okra and cucumbers. "These two crops created not only work for family labor," Bryant added, "but also a source of income at a time when many of the families didn't have any money coming in."

As the people in the community have gradually increased their income, they have begun to think about providing recreation for their families. And most of them agree that the best way to do it is to provide communitywide recreation.

"We're convinced on the idea," said Willie Penn, president of the Mt. Meigs Community Club, "that it's better to provide recreation for our young people than have them hunt for it."

Penn has proof that his idea is sound. Before the community developed a recreation program, it wasn't uncommon for three or four

Below, community club president Willie Penn, left, chats with Extension Agent Addre Bryant in front of the new community center. At left, two Mt. Meigs children enjoy the new recreation equipment.



young people to be arrested per weekend. "Now we don't have that many in a month," Penn said.

"These people realized they had a problem," Bryant said. "So they sat down and started looking for ways to develop their resources."

"We saw that what we needed was a recreational center," Penn recalled. "We started checking into possible ways to finance it." Extension helped them to form the Mt. Meigs Community Center, Inc. in December 1967, and to borrow money through the Farmers Home Administration.

The first loan of \$18,000 enabled them to build the first part of their recreation building. Even though it contained 2,700 square feet of floor space, the facility soon became too small. An \$8,000 loan in 1968 enabled them to build 900 more square feet of floor space.

Families pay a \$10 per year membership fee. Individual membership

dues are \$5 per year. There are about 400 families in the community.

"This fee will help repay the loan and cover the operating cost of the center," explained Penn.

The center is open to the youth of the community every night. John McDade, a local coach, is the youth director. "Naturally," said Penn, "Friday and Saturday nights are the time when we have the largest number. It isn't uncommon to have 100 people on each of these nights."

During the school year, 60 children attend Head Start at the community center.

"These folks really take pride in their community center," said Bryant.

In addition to having dances and playing games in the center, outside facilities include swings, rides, slide boards, and a fenced-in ball field. Montgomery County has paved the road to the facility. "We hope to add lights to the field as soon as possible," Penn said. □



Meeting the needs of migrants

Extension, volunteers serve homemakers, youth

About 1,500 migrant workers arrive in Orange County, New York, each year to plant, raise, and harvest onions, lettuce, and celery. Many are accompanied by their families and live in the Pine Island area.

A day care center and summer school are available to the children. The number of families taking advantage of these opportunities has been increasing steadily.

Orange County Cooperative Extension has for several years been aware of the needs of these migrant agricultural workers and their families. Extension provided leadership in the development of a Family Health Clinic and has conducted numerous 4-H and home economics programs for migrant adults and youth.

The first organized 4-H program, directed by a 4-H summer assistant and adult leaders, reached 75 migrant children. Project work was carried on 2 days a week for 5 weeks. Each participant took part in approximately 15 hours of programs and activities.

During the summer of 1968, 4-H and home economics programs were offered on a greatly expanded scale. Funds were made available for one staff member, equipment, and program materials. Many donations were made—patterns, yard goods, utensils, food, arts and crafts materials, and the use of two buildings plus recreation facilities located on several acres of land.

This concentrated effort reached 150 children who participated 2 hours per day for 6 weeks in a 4-H program, and 25 adults who took part in the home economics sessions over a period of 8 weeks.

The goals of the 4-H program included:

by
David W. Dik
4-H Youth Development Specialist
and
Helen R. Stantial
Orange County Extension Home Economist
New York Cooperative Extension Service

—Teaching specifics of individual projects such as clothing, foods, arts and crafts, conservation, and recreation.

—Involving 4-H junior leaders with migrant children to acquaint both groups with a different way of life.

—Inspiring leadership abilities in the migrant children and 4-H'ers.

—Helping the migrant children gain a sense of confidence in themselves and in the community.

—Providing worthwhile programs and activities for migrant children during after-school hours.

The program depended on volunteers, and recruitment became a major task. Twelve 4-H junior leaders, supported by adult 4-H leaders and interested community people, helped to fill out staff needs.

Volunteer participation ranged from 3 to 20 per day. Many of the 4-H junior leaders were on hand 4 days a week for the entire 6-week program.

Both adult and junior leaders found their summer experiences with the migrant children demanding and extremely rewarding. The most effective volunteers were committed to the program and possessed imagination plus flexibility.

Future programs will need to add several more paid staff members to assure as much individual instruction as possible.

During the 6-week program, girls in the clothing project made dresses, skirts, aprons, pillows, pocketbooks, headscarves, and doll clothes. Although equipment and instructors were not adequate in number, the results in spite of limitations were outstanding. Thirteen girls proudly modeled their dresses and skirts at a dress revue. This was a new experience for all who participated.

Forty-five 5- to 8-year-olds attended the program. Special attention had to be given to activities geared to their level. Their participation was limited to hand sewing, working mainly with felt to make animal-shaped bean bags, change purses, felt boards, and doll clothes. A collection of 20 dolls was available for the children to bathe, groom, and dress.

Foods proved to be most popular for both boys and girls. Everyone had the opportunity to make cookies, brownies, cakes, and other simple items.

Particular attention was given to establishing good habits—clean hands, clean utensils, proper food storage, hot water and soap for cleanup, etc.



The success of the work with migrant families depended on volunteer workers, such as the 4-H junior leader shown here helping girls with a sewing project.

The recreation program was supervised by a physical education instructor with the assistance of volunteer adults and 4-H members. The limited number of volunteers prohibited grouping by age. Softball, football, basketball, and games were offered. Swings and other play equipment were also available for use by younger children. This effort could be expanded greatly in future years.

Nature walks, an activity developed spontaneously, proved to be interesting and successful. The children, lacking education in the field of nature, were anxious to learn names of trees, wildlife, weeds, and clouds. These walks made the children much more aware of their surroundings and also provided a time to talk with the children individually.

The home economics objective was to provide educational programs and activities for migrant women to furnish them information on improving their home and family living.

The women received information on:

—Clothing construction, in order that they might develop skills in using sewing equipment and working with fabric.

—Proper care of hair, skin, hands, and feet.

—Practical storage ideas adaptable to a variety of situations.

—Importance of an adequate diet, including the basic four foods.

—Food preparation ideas which are economical, easy to prepare, and nutritious.

The women met from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. once each week for a discussion and work session at the Migrant Family Clinic in Pine Island. The facilities included a modern kitchen, ample table space, and work area.

The adult program was conducted by the two Extension home economists with the assistance of the director of the Migrant Family Clinic.

During the 8-week program, the women learned to operate a sewing machine and make simple articles of clothing for themselves or family members. They made canister sets to store staple goods in their kitchens.

The home economists demonstrated an inexpensive master mix which lends itself to the making of a variety of products including biscuits, muffins, and cakes. These products are nutritious and easy to prepare from the mix.

Evaluation of both the youth and adult phases of the programs has been encouraging. The effort with migrant children was extremely successful. The youth involved changed in a very positive way during the 6-week program.

Migrant children need the opportunity to live by the 4-H slogan, "Learn by Doing." More in-depth programs should be offered, along with a wide variety of 4-H projects. Numerous activities should be planned to provide interesting and educational experiences.

The program for the migrant women was also quite successful and attracted many more women than was anticipated. The programs provided an opportunity for women of all ages and backgrounds to meet together to discuss topics of general interest concerning their homes and families.

A continual effort to cross cultural, racial, economic, and geographic lines will hasten better understanding between migrants and the community. □



This panel of experts answered questions phoned from meeting places throughout the State. From left to right, Dr. Carl Coppock, Cornell; and Dr. A. M. Smith, Dr. J. G. Welch, and K. S. Gibson, all from the University of Vermont.

Vermont's 'electronic teach-in'

by

Tom McCormick
Associate Extension Editor
University of Vermont

In Alburg, Vermont, a few miles from the Canadian border, a dairyman leaned toward his television. Down in Brattleboro, near the Massachusetts line, a farmer gestured as he spoke into his phone. And a couple of miles from the University of Vermont campus in Burlington, a dairy scientist told the answer to a television camera.

Extension was sponsoring Vermont's first statewide electronic meeting.

The script was crisp, the patter was brisk and the program on winter feeding of dairy cattle flowed smoothly. A sampling of the audience later supported the participants' instinctive feeling that the show had clicked.

But it wasn't instant success. A lot of hard work went into the pre-

parations, and several of the techniques need additional refining.

Producer Karin Kristiansson and her board quizzed farmers and agents to get a popular topic. They also checked the coverage of educational television and decided to beef it up.

Agents were asked to get meeting sites at 16 locations around the State. Arrangements were made for telephone links to the studio and for staffing of each meeting. Even the studio audience was invited.

Next, the agents were asked to give local publicity to the program. They stressed the opportunity to question the video panelists by phone and to get additional information from local hosts, usually the agent himself or a specialist.

This extra dimension added con-

siderable impact to the program. Questions coming in from the 16 mini-meetings around the State added drama to the screen as the camera panned across the group manning the phones in the studio.

By the same token, the opportunity to question the panelists sharpened their presentations and added a sense of participation to the audience.

In the opinion sample that followed, 24 percent said they got most of their information gains from the television program and 8 percent said they benefited more from the local discussion. But an overwhelming 68 percent said the two went together as an information package.

Later feedback showed that many farmers passed up the local meetings to watch the program in their living



Dr. Carl Coppock, Cornell dairy nutrition specialist, speaks via television to a statewide Vermont audience.

rooms. Although they missed the give and take of the local sessions, they felt that the comfort of attending a statewide meeting without leaving the house had benefits of its own.

The opinion sample, taken at the meetings, showed that 80 percent found the program very interesting, 20 percent found it somewhat interesting, and none saw it as a washout.

What was accomplished?

A total of 265 persons attended regional meetings and got advanced instruction in winter feeding. By their interest and questions, they showed they were thinking and learning. Audience figures are always a guess, but certainly a much larger number watched the program at home.

The material presented on the program was used for a special issue of

Green Mountain Dairying, a newsletter sent to every dairyman in the State.

Extension agents themselves through the questions asked and their own participation, got a quick refresher course in both feeding and the needs of their clientele.

Audiences were polled and the agents were checked later for feedback. Response was definitely favorable to the scheduling of another show several weeks later.

Is this the technique of the future?

The answer has to be qualified. Certainly it will become an important addition to Extension's communications complex. But it seems unlikely that it will be the ultimate and only communications tool.

The program was extensively pro-

moted on the local scene. In addition to an out-of-State speaker, the program used the best dairy talent in the State. The manhours involved were quite high. It wasn't simply a case of wheeling a camera into a classroom and getting an extra dividend from a previously prepared class.

Officials will wonder whether the same all-out effort will be required for all succeeding shows. They'll also wonder whether the impact of the first was due to novelty as well as content.

They also realize that many who could have used the information were watching commercial television on competing channels.

That's the cautious side. From the optimistic side of the looking glass, the program did present complicated and essential material to many of the most influential dairymen in the State. Their example and leadership almost certainly will spread this information with near record speed.

Extension Director Robert P. Davison is among the enthusiastic backers of this new teaching package. He reports that the dairy program has set the format for similar ones in various subject matter areas in both agriculture and home economics.

"This ETV program proved to be a most useful method of doing Extension teaching in depth and to a large interested audience," he said. "A key to the success of the operation was the involvement of agents and specialist staff in planning the program so that a fully developed educational job could be done at each location."

As Davison indicated, televised meetings follow the main thrust of traditional meetings. They must be carefully planned and promoted and the results are never 100 percent. But they do reach and teach people.

Television does this reaching and teaching a little faster than most other communications techniques. And that's the name of the game in this high-speed era. □

Informed food shoppers

by

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Jackson County, Missouri

and

John G. Gross

Extension Studies Specialist

University of Missouri



Two buses came to a stop at the cave-like entrance to one of the world's largest underground food storage facilities. The 95 women who quickly alighted were not seeking refuge in a bomb shelter—the 30 acres of the mined-out limestone quarry which they entered were to be their "classroom" for 2 hours.

These women were "IFS'ers"—enrolled in a short course offered by the Jackson County, Missouri, Extension Service. "Informed Food Shoppers" was organized in 1968 by Mrs. Lois E. Harrison, a home economist of the Jackson County Extension Center.

Women had expressed the need for such a course. They asked for help in food shopping, saying they filled their market baskets without any real knowledge of the background of food. They did not understand reasons for the wide spread between prices paid to farmer-producers and retail food store prices.

They had only vague ideas about food protection and regulatory laws. They were unaware of the many facets of food marketing, supply and price relationship, or market place merchandising. They did not fully appreciate their personal privileges and responsibilities as food shoppers.

This sounds like quite a chore for food shoppers to undertake—and it was. The course was set up for in-depth study. Once each month, class sessions were held and explanatory tours were taken to sites of food production, processing, and marketing. Each of the ten tours lasted 5 or 6 hours.

The Kansas City area, which includes Jackson County, Missouri, is in the center of the Nation. Great population centers are to the east; great food production areas are to the west.

A great amount of food used in this country goes through Kansas City. It stops there for storage or some kind

of processing or merchandising. This situation afforded a natural opportunity for a personal, on-the-spot, continuing educational experience for homemakers.

IFS'ers, who were mostly organization leaders, relayed their learning to other homemaker-consumers. Organizations, for the most part, paid expenses for their representatives. Class members represented a wide range of groups—from Extension and 4-H Club leaders to consumers' associations, women's clubs, church organizations, and businesses.

The course was announced through organization meetings, a Continuing Education Opportunities brochure distributed by the Extension Center, newspapers, radio, newsletters, and personal letters.

Mrs. Harrison worked personally with each food industry owner, manager, or tour guide on arranging details of each on-the-spot learning experience. If a meal was part of



Dr. John Gross, Extension Studies Specialist, awards certificates to two IFS'ers.

IFS'ers learn about newspaper food advertising from the advertising manager of a Missouri newspaper.



a day's tour, this, too, was prearranged in detail.

Within every tour, actual work in progress was viewed, explained, studied, and discussed. Time was allowed for individual questions. Additional buzz sessions or question-answer discussions were carried on while the chartered buses whisked IFS'ers to their next stop. Bulletins and other handout teaching aids were issued at each tour stop.

One IFS classroom was a modern egg factory, where women learned how fresh eggs are delivered to retail stores within 48 hours after being laid. Another was a dimly lit mushroom growing house. In the milking parlor of a Grade A dairy, they learned the reality of "milk untouched by human hand."

IFS'ers walked in the alleys between livestock pens of the Kansas City livestock yards, where they saw and heard packing house buyers deal with commission firm sellers. They sat

at the livestock auction ring where "yield grade" and "quality grade," were explained by cattle marketing experts.

IFS'ers realized the importance of being informed food shoppers as they watched Federal meat graders inspect and stamp beef carcasses; saw cured bacon being sliced and packaged in a meat packing plant; watched great agitator blades stirring a vat of cottage cheese; and saw apples traveling along the moving belt of a size-sorter.

Homemakers were amazed at whole freight trains loaded with frozen foods pulled inside an underground food storage facility. They were equally amazed in another "classroom" to see tanks filled with thousands of pounds of live lobster, and storage rooms stacked with salmon from the Pacific Northwest, shrimp from the Gulf of Mexico, and haddock from Nova Scotia.

In their visit to the Food and Drug Administration, homemakers realized

again the benefits of Government protection. They saw examples of products found by FDA to be adulterated, misbranded, or offering false hope to the consumer. "Read the label, Mabel" became almost a password.

The combination of tours and activities seemed to be an excellent learning situation. Knowledge increase and attitude change were measured by an "Interest Inventory" (pretest) and a "Dividend Inventory" (posttest).

Each inventory consisted of items designed to measure knowledge and attitudes related to food marketing. Statistically significant increases in scores indicated a successful program. Dr. John G. Gross, Extension studies specialist at the University of Missouri, constructed the one-page inventories.

Fifty-three enrollees received Certificates of Achievement issued by the Jackson County Extension Council.

The Informed Food Shoppers short course was out of the ordinary in its approach to expressed problems and questions of homemakers. It provided an enjoyable atmosphere for learning through group participation and through experience. Organization leaders became part of the solution as they "learned their way out of the problem."

The enthusiastic cooperation of food industry representatives and State Extension personnel contributed immensely to an improved understanding of the marketing system by the IFS'ers. □

Impact of Communications technology

The day this is being written, 2,000 farmers in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, are punching bits of data and questions into a computer terminal board. They're getting answers to their equipment management problems from the computer center at the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C.

On Saturday, a horticulturist in Laramie, Wyoming, will step into a lecture room filled with about 40 people to teach landscaping. Nothing unusual except that a much greater number of people located in five other classrooms throughout the State will also hear the lecture. With the aid of a telewriter they'll all see the drawings and diagrams. They'll be able to question the instructor as if he were present in their room, and they'll be able to participate in the overall discussions and interact with class members at all the distant locations as well as those in their own location.

On any day, a livestock specialist working with a feedlot operator in northeast Nebraska may want to discuss a problem with his research counterpart in Lincoln before making recommendations. It doesn't take a week. He simply walks to his car, calls the University at Lincoln on his two-way radio, and gets his information on the spot. Instant help!

The first Monday of each month the Director of Extension in Wisconsin conducts a full-fledged staff meeting including workers in 49 counties. Of course they don't all gather at the University campus in Madison—they're connected through a special telephone hookup.

North Carolina State University has successfully taught farm management by television to farmers at widely scattered locations over the State at the same time. Vermont has taught dairy technology to its farmers in the same manner.

And the "tip-a-phone" has been with us a long time as a dispenser of information. Many other examples could be cited.

The whole point is that advances in communications technology are ushering in innovative ways of doing Extension work. Some of them are with us now. The impact is profound and will grow with time.

They are fascinating and novel to behold. But their implications run far deeper. I doubt that most of us can muster the imagination and foresight to accurately predict the total impact even for the next 10 years. Each new technological advance opens up its own unique opportunities.

But we have not yet realized the benefits of our present technology.

We'll be able, for instance, to increase both the size and numbers of our publics with much less staff expansion than would be necessary without these communications tools.

Extension work will become more exciting, satisfying, and productive. Professional workers will become involved in problems of much greater complexity and magnitude. Especially trained semi-professionals using some of this modern equipment will be able to do routine jobs that now require the attention of professionals. Many things that formerly required days of work (including travel) will be reduced to minutes or hours.

We're on the threshold of an era more exciting than most of us realize. It will become even more exciting as we more nearly realize the potential of these tools in extending our work.—WJW